

Year-End Reflection Exercise

This guided reflection exercise will help you critically reflect on life and service. You can easily modify it for families or teams to do together. Set aside sixty minutes to complete this exercise. You may want to use a journal or separate piece of paper.

Your first step is to pray and ask God to guide you and help you to hear Him.

Reflection requires slowing down to listen to God, to others and to oneself. It fosters learning, stimulates growth, encourages celebration, calls for course corrections, invites grieving, identifies priorities, and renews focus and energy.

1. Look back and remember: Reflection is often difficult because we simply can't remember what's happened over a longer time-frame. Take a moment to review the year's events by considering the questions below starting back at last New Year's Eve. Privately reflect as the memories come up.

- What were you doing last New Year's Eve?
- Who were you with?
- What were you hoping for in the year ahead?
- What challenges were before you?
- What was going on in the lives of the people close to you?

Write each month (January to December) in your journal or on separate piece of paper. Go month by month and mark down special events: birthdays, anniversaries, vacations, holidays or significant responsibilities.

Ask questions for each month like:

- What was going on?
- What was important?

2. Intentional reflection: With memories jogged, the next step is intentional, prayerful reflection. Take the time and space you need to privately journal responses to the following questions about the past year.

- What's been hardest?
- What surprised you most?

- **What are you thankful for? Who has blessed you? (List at least 10 items)**
- **Where did you fail? What did you learn?**
- **What's been disappointing?**
- **Whom or what do you need to grieve?**
- **Where have you been stretched? Where have you grown?**
- **What have you learned?**
- **What have you been encouraged by? What should you celebrate?**
- **Where do you see blessings from waiting? From struggle?**
- **Whom or what have you invested in?**
- **How have you seen God at work?**
- **Where do you see Jesus more in your life and leadership?**
- **What have you learned about God?**

As you begin to look ahead to a new year, reflect on:

- **What might be on God's heart for you this next year?**
- **What are your big priorities for the year ahead?**
- **Is there an area of your character God may want to grow?**
- **Are there some key people you want/need to spend more time with?**
- **What spiritual and life rhythms do you need to get in place?**
- **Imagine reflecting back a year from now, what words do you want to be able to say about how you lived the year before you?**



3. Processing and Sharing: If you are doing this exercise with your family or a team, invite (not require) each person to share their responses to two of the questions. This helps people externalize their internal processing. It can also be a very special community-building time. After you have listened to each other, share if there are any follow-up or next steps flowing from your reflection time so far.

For example:

- **A note of thanks to be written?**
- **Forgiveness to be extended or sought?**
- **Something that needs to be left behind.**
- **A “page” that needs to be turned?**
- **New priorities that need to be established?**

4. Prayer: Take a moment to pray over your reflection. Offer worshipful prayers of thanksgiving and prayers for the journey ahead.

Cheering you on in life and in the new year ahead,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Brown". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of "Steve" and "Brown" being capitalized and prominent.

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